

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
Charleston Division**

STERLING MISANIN, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

ALAN WILSON, in his official capacity as
the Attorney General of South Carolina, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. _____

DECLARATION OF JILL RAY

I, Jill Ray, hereby declare and state as follows:

1. My name is Jill Ray.¹ I am a plaintiff in the above-captioned action and submit this declaration in support of Plaintiff's Motion for a Preliminary Injunction.

2. I am over the age of 18, of sound mind, and in all respects competent to testify. I have personal knowledge of the information contained in this Declaration and would testify completely to those facts if called to do so.

3. I am a South Carolina resident. I live in Richland County with my wife and my son, who is 2 years old. I have lived in South Carolina since November 2013, when I moved here from Hawaii.

¹ Jill Ray is a pseudonym. I am proceeding under pseudonym to protect my right to privacy and myself from discrimination, harassment, and violence, as well as retaliation for seeking to protect my rights.

4. Prior to moving to South Carolina, I was in the United States Navy. I served in the Navy for 6 years in the intelligence space. When I left the Navy in 2013, I was a Petty Officer 2nd Class.

5. I currently work as an organizer, trainer, and education specialist on issues impacting LGBTQ+ individuals. Prior to my current job I was a teacher at the University of South Carolina, where I taught English to international students.

6. My spouse is a teacher at a public school in South Carolina. As an employee of the state, she receives insurance coverage for herself and our family through South Carolina Public Benefit Authority (PEBA).

7. As a veteran, I qualify for Veterans Affairs (VA) health care. I also receive insurance coverage as a beneficiary of my wife's PEBA plan.

8. I am a transgender woman.

9. I experience and have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria due to the significant distress caused by the disconnect between my sex assigned at birth and my gender identity.

10. Before I came out as transgender and began receiving gender affirming care, I was at a low point in my life. I was experiencing such severe depression and anxiety that I did not even feel comfortable leaving my house.

11. I came out as transgender three and a half years ago, and the first person I came out to was my spouse. She was not surprised when I told her, and with her affirmation and support, I decided to seek out medical care. Shortly after, I told my primary care doctor at the VA Hospital that I am transgender. My primary care doctor referred me to a psychologist, who diagnosed me with gender dysphoria in May 2021.

12. Through working with and receiving care from both my mental health providers and my endocrinologist, I was able to explore my options for medical care to treat my gender dysphoria. After discussing my care options with my providers, and after careful consideration of both the risks and benefits of care, I began undergoing hormone therapy as medically necessary treatment for my gender dysphoria in July 2021. At present, I am being prescribed estrogen, progesterone, and spironolactone for my gender dysphoria. I see my endocrinologist approximately every 6 months, and I fill my prescriptions every 3 months. Accessing gender affirming health care is the best decision I have made for myself. Hormone therapy allows me to live as the woman I am and has given me my life back, but it does not address the totality of my dysphoria.

13. In consultation with and under the care of my medical and mental health providers, I have decided to seek gender affirming surgery. I obtained referral letters from my endocrinologist, primary care doctor, and a psychology evaluator at the VA Hospital in South Carolina to receive surgical care.

14. Without insurance, based on testimonials I have researched so far, I anticipate that my gender affirming surgery will cost between \$100,000 and \$250,000. I cannot afford to pay for this prohibitively expensive surgery out of pocket.

15. The health care I receive through the VA only covers my hormone replacement therapy. The VA Hospital does not provide gender-affirming surgical procedures.

16. I planned to rely on my spouse's PEBA insurance plan in order to pay for my gender affirming surgery. Prior to the passage of H 4624, it was my understanding that my PEBA insurance would cover the cost of my gender affirming surgery.

17. Being able to obtain hormone therapy in the form of estrogen, progesterone, and spironolactone has made me feel like a whole new person. The impact of the gender-affirming care

I have received on my life and wellbeing cannot be overstated. The care I have received has brought me even closer to my spouse. I have formed meaningful, lasting friendships and community that bring me joy and fulfillment.

18. The difference between the person I was before and the woman I am now is—as my wife sometimes reminds me—night and day. Before coming out I could not leave the house and my relationships were suffering. Now, I am involved in my community, thriving, confident, and happy.

19. Although my family, who are religious, were at first hesitant when I told them I am a woman, they have since understood and accepted me for who I am. I feel more comfortable in my relationships with them now that I can openly be myself.

20. The gender-affirming surgery my medical and mental health providers have referred me for is medically necessary. It will allow me to bring my body more fully into alignment with who I am.

21. Without gender affirming surgery, I will continue to experience pain and harm. Although hormone therapy has significantly improved my wellbeing, without gender affirming surgery I am unable to be my most authentic and happiest self, spouse, and parent.

22. I understand, however, that the South Carolina legislature has enacted a new law, H 4624, that will prohibit PEBA-insured plans from covering medical services for the treatment of gender dysphoria.

23. South Carolina's law prohibiting my wife's PEBA plan from covering gender-affirming care has caused me a great deal of distress and anxiety. When I learned of the law, I had to put all my plans for my gender affirming surgery on hold despite already receiving referrals and selecting a doctor to perform the procedure.

24. I simply cannot afford to pay for my medically necessary gender affirming surgery without the coverage I receive through my wife's PEBA plan.

25. It is incredibly stressful and debilitating to have to worry about whether I will be able to get the medical care that I need, or whether without gender affirming surgery, I will not feel like myself. I want to feel safe in my body, my home, and in public spaces. Everyone deserves that, and the fact that I and so many other trans people are being denied that right now, by actions like South Carolina's adoption of H 4624, is a burden on both our physical and mental health.

26. The actions by the South Carolina government threaten the health and wellbeing of transgender South Carolinians like me, and many transgender individuals and adolescents will be harmed as a result of this law.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: August 27, 2024

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